

JOSEPH FLY-IN LANDS JULY 12

Historic DC-3 called to duty at D-Day reenactment

By Katherine Stickroth
For the Chieftain

As a young man, Bill Hall worked on his grandfather's ranch which overlooks the Joseph State Airport. Hall is now a director of the upcoming 2019 Wallowa County Fly-in, which will bring an array of historic aircraft to the Joseph airport on July 12 and 13. Planes include several WWII war birds — a P-40 and a replica of a P-64. The event also helps support Joseph Charter School's unique aviation program.

For the past five years, a big, crowd-pleasing DC-3 has announced the opening of the Fly-in with a low level flight coming up the Wallowa Valley. That plane, now more than 80 years old, was flying for the Army Air Corps in WWII, although it spent its wartime tour state-side. This year it will miss the Joseph Fly-in because after flying to England for the 75th anniversary of the Normandy invasion, it's getting a well-earned rest and refurbishment in England, and a few more European engagements before heading back to the U.S.

The DC-3 was built in 1937. Famous WWI flying ace and Medal of Honor recipient Eddie Rickenbacker, then vice-president of Eastern Airlines, purchased the plane as one of the airline's original Silver Fleet. It is one of the oldest DC-3s

still in flight and holds the world's record for DC-3 flight time.

The DC-3s regular appearance at the Joseph Fly-in can be credited, in a way, to local flying icon Ted Grote, who passed away in late in 2014, and on Bill Hall's connections among the historic aviation community. During WWII, Grote flew DC-3s from Texas to California as the first leg of their mission in the war effort. "Knowing that Ted Grote would be really interested in seeing that plane," Hall said, "I invited Pete Nickerson, the DC-3s present owner, to bring the DC-3 to our 2014 Fly-in." Nickerson did. Ted Grote was delighted. Grote broke into a grin as he watched it taxi to the tarmac.

"I used to fly those," he said. "Beautiful old bird." Soon after this special reunion, Ted passed away.

Last month, Hall accompanied ten other men in the same DC-3 on a flight from Aurora, Oregon, across the United States, crossing the Atlantic and arriving at Duxford, England, airbase. The aircraft joined additional DC-3s and C-47s which were gathering for a flyover to Normandy, France to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

Hall describes, "We stopped in Montana, North Dakota, Michigan and Maine. We then hopped across the northern Atlantic, landing at former WWII landing strips — Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Scotland— used by the United States to transport equipment to



At the 2014 fly-in Ted Grote, 94, takes the controls of the historic DC-3 aircraft similar to those he piloted during WWII.

England during the war. We arrived at Duxford where briefings were held for pilots preparing for the reenactment. Many participants were dressed in WWII uniforms for the event."

The DC-3 bore its WWII Army Air Corps star and registration number assigned when requisitioned in 1943.

About his time on the DC-3, in England and on the beaches of Normandy for the historic memorial, Navy veteran Hall commented, "The whole experience added up to something quite moving for me."

This year's fly-in — and the days before the official fly-in, will likely welcome some outstanding and historic aircraft, Bill Hall noted.

About 10 or 11 a.m. on the morning of Thursday, July 11, we'll have two outstanding, historic jet aircraft flying over Joseph," Hall said.

"Mark Peterson and Phil Fogg will fly in for the morning of Thursday the 11th and we expect them to fly over from Boise in formation and do a missed approach pass before landing at Joseph," he said. "They will both be flying jets. Mark Peterson will be piloting the Dornier Alpha Jet (a German aircraft). Phil Fogg will be flying the Aero L-39 "Albatros" Czech-built jet that he was in last year. Phil won grand champion at the Reno Air Races Jet Category in 2014, racing an L39."

Hall expects the L-39 to remain in Joseph

AIRCRAFT FLYING IN AND ON DISPLAY

- Boeing CH47 "Chinook" Army National Guard twin rotor helicopter
- LifeFlight helicopter
- North American AT6 "Texan" (WWII era)
- Curtiss P40 "Warhawk" (WWII era)
- North American P64 (WWII era, replica)
- Quest Kodiak 100 Utility Bush Plane
- 1934 Perth Amboy
- "Bird" biplane, courtesy of Dick and Lucas Stangel (pre-WWII)
- Aero Vodchody L39 "Albatros" jet trainer/ fighter & now racer (Czech Cold War era)
- Boeing Stearman PT-17 military trainers (WWII era)
- Stinson V77 "Reliant" 1930's through 1943, commercial and military

July 12 and 13.

Various STOL (Short take-off and landing) aircraft will provide demonstrations and some special event at this year's flying, Hall noted. "The STOL demonstrations by some of our most experienced local Wallowa County canyon pilots will be fun to watch. They'll be flying in highly capable aircraft well-suited to STOL work, Piper Super Cubs and modified Cessna 170s.

For even more fun and a great opportunity to experience historic aircraft, the North American AT6 will be available to take paying customers on half hour and one hour rides with aerobatic demonstrations and instruction by request. Jim Shotwell, pilot. Jim will also give some selective rides to military veterans at no charge, time permitting. Priority goes to oldest veterans interested in a ride.

"We are always surprised and pleased by some of the interesting aircraft that fly in on Friday and Saturday. We don't always know everything that is going to show up so we may very well have additional noteworthy and historic aircraft on the ramp to pique the interest of aviation fans and fly-in attendees," he said.



A P-40 Flying Tiger aircraft at the National Aircraft Museum, is similar to the plane that will be at the Joseph Fly-In on July 12. U.S.A.F. National Flight Museum




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